

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended for clarity. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiners Martin and Shah at the interview held October 12, 2006, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,254,227 to Merz et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0196317 to Santhanam et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the interview, claim 1 is revised to clarify the functional feature of the plurality of channels. This is supported, for example, by Applicants' paragraph [0047]. No new matter is added.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "a plurality of channels to freely communicate at least an ambient air from the ventilation port between the interior region and the container, wherein each of the plurality of channels provides a different path that channels ambient air from the ventilation port to the second container." These features are recited similarly in independent claims 10 and 11.

As discussed during the interview, Applicants disclose, for example, in paragraphs [0037], [0039], and [0047], a plurality of channels (137, 138) that allow ambient air to freely communicate between ambient and a second container, which has a capillary. That is, multiple, different paths of air communicate with the second container. As discussed during the interview and explained in Applicants' paragraph [0047], one possible advantage to this structure is that even if a spill causes some of the liquid to escape from the second container (such as by inadvertent tipping of the container), the liquid may become trapped by the

spillover region or trapped in only one of the channels. Because of the plurality of different paths, even if one path becomes blocked, air communication between vent and the container can be maintained by one or more other different paths. For example, Applicants' illustrated embodiment provides a first path that travels through restricted channel 137 on one side of the lid top, while a second path travels through a different restricted channel 138 on an opposite side of the lid top. This improves operation of the printer by maintaining proper atmospheric communication, even if one or more of the channels are blocked by spilled liquid.

As admitted in the Office Action, Merz fails to teach or disclose the above-identified features. Merz instead has a direct vent opening 60 that defines a single path between ambient and the second container. Santhanam fails to overcome the deficiencies of Merz with respect to the above identified features.

Santhanam discloses a technique for dispensing ink into an inkjet cartridge that comprises three chambers 40, 42 and 44 (abstract, and paragraph [0039]). Santhanam also discloses a lid structure that includes three filled ports 240A- 240C and three vent openings 244B, 244C, and 244D, each provided above and for each of the ink chambers 40, 42, and 44 as well as a terminal 244E (paragraph [0050], and Fig. 9). The labyrinth path in Santhanam is for the purpose of reducing fluid spillage. Santhanam does not appreciate or contemplate the need for multiple paths leading to each container or the problem if the path becomes clogged. Santhanam's structure provides only one single path for communicating ambient air to each of the three chambers. Santhanam fails to teach or disclose a plurality of different channels to freely communicate the ambient air from terminal 244E to each of the chambers 40, 42, and 44. Accordingly, even if combined with Merz, the combination fails to teach or disclose each and every feature of independent claims 1, 10 and 11 and claims dependent therefrom.

With respect to claim 14, Merz fails to teach or disclose communicating the fluid from the first spillover region of the at least one spillover region to a second spillover region when the volume of the fluid exceeds the volumetric capacity of the first spillover region. Merz specifically teaches one spillover region, tube overflow 82 (Figs. 1-2, col. 3, line 65-col. 4, lines 38). Santhanam fails to teach or disclose at least two spillover regions. Accordingly, the combination of Merz and Santhanam fails to render claim 14 obvious, which recites two spillover regions.

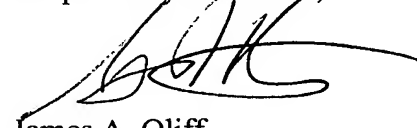
Additionally, with respect to dependent claim 17, Merz and Santhanam both fail to teach a first path provided on one side of the container and a second path provided on an opposite side of the container. Rather, it would appear from the Figures that all paths leading to the three containers essentially pass through one side, such that if the container were spilled, fluid may block flow to all of the containers. However, because of the configuration of claim 17, even if a container is spilled on its side, only that side may become clogged, but the opposite side will be at a substantially higher position and may avoid clogging. Thus, because neither reference appreciates the problems overcome by the subject matter of claim 17, claim 17 would not have been obvious.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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